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A PROGRAM FOR EXPEDITING CURRICULAR PLANNING IN MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES.

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DESPITE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING, CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS REMAIN UNRESOLVED BECAUSE NO INTEGRATED NATIONAL EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO CONSOLIDATE WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND OFFER IT IN USABLE FORM TO SCHOOL SYSTEMS. ONE SUCH PROBLEM IS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS. A 1965 CONFERENCE ON DEFINITIONS OF LEVELS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING PROPOSED A 3-YEAR PROJECT TO MOBILIZE RESOURCES INTO A COHERENT PLAN FOR CURRICULAR REFORM WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR BOTH SHORT-RANGE CHANGES AND BASES FOR RESEARCH. A SET OF TOOL PUBLICATIONS WOULD BE PUBLISHED, INCLUDING A BASIC "CURRICULUM RATIONALE" TO DETAIL THE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM'S RELATION TO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND TO OTHER DISCIPLINES, THREE "CURRICULUM PLANNING GUIDES" TO RESPOND TO THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF FRENCH, SPANISH, AND GERMAN, AND A "DOCUMENTATION BANK" WHEREIN ALL BIBLIOGRAPHIES WOULD BE RECORDED AND CLASSIFIED FOR REFERENCE IN FUTURE RESEARCH. ALSO IN THE SCHEDULE ARE PLANS TO IDENTIFY THE PROBLEMS FOR RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTATION, TO ENCOURAGE INSTITUTES FOR CONSULTANTS, TO INITIATE A NEWSLETTER, AND TO STAGE A CONCENTRATED INFORMATION CAMPAIGN. INCLUDED IN THIS PROPOSAL DOCUMENT ARE A DETAILED STATEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES IN THE "RATIONALE" AND AN OUTLINE OF A SAMPLE "CURRICULUM PLANNING GUIDE." (AS)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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A PROGRAM FOR EXPEDITING CURRICULAR PLANNING IN MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

I. General Background

During the past decade much significant progress has occurred in the teaching of modern foreign languages in American education. Aims and objectives have been reexamined, the applications of linguistics and new methodologies have received wide attention, a variety of new instructional materials has appeared, the language laboratory has become commonplace, longer sequences of language instruction are being organized in the schools, over 21,000 language teachers have been introduced to new concepts at NDEA institutes, the student population in increasing proportions has enrolled in language classes, etc. Very large sums of Federal, state and private funds have been expended to encourage the development of language instruction.

As an example of the progress that has been taking place, the following extract is cited from the Modern Foreign Language Newsletter of September 1965, issued by the State Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, North Carolina:

FL000019

Foreign Language Progress in North Carolina. Since the original implementation of the National Defense Education Act in 1958, the growth of the foreign language program in North Carolina and the improvement of its quality have been impressive. The general two-year pattern of study is giving way to three-, four-, and six-year sequences. In 1959 fewer than 50 schools offered a third year of a modern foreign language. In 1964 this number had increased to approximately 300. Still others have added a third year in the fall of 1965. Several of the larger school systems now provide a six-year sequence, a few an eight- or nine-year sequence, and one school system is this year inaugurating a foreign language program in grades one through twelve. High school enrollment in modern foreign languages has increased 112 percent since 1959, or 80 percent more than the increase in total high school enrollment in the State.

More important even than the quantitative measures of foreign language growth is the obvious improvement in the quality of foreign language instruction. Approximately 65 percent of the State's modern foreign language teachers have attended NDEA summer institutes. Each year several hundred teachers in North Carolina attend workshops and conferences at which they are introduced to new ideas and new materials. The audio-lingual approach, with its emphasis on the development of the listening and speaking skills as a basis for the reading and writing skills, is being used in the majority of the foreign language classrooms. Although quality is more difficult to measure objectively than quantity, visits to schools throughout the State and reports from foreign language departments in the colleges and universities on the language ability of entering freshmen, all indicate that considerable progress is being made in the quality of foreign language instruction in the high schools.

The experience in North Carolina can be multiplied many times by reports from other states. But professional vigor has been so preoccupied with churning expansion that some fundamental problems have been necessarily neglected or passed over, and the sudden flowering of modern foreign language study in recent years may wither unless a sound integrated national effort is made to interpret and consolidate advances while identifying the key

critical areas requiring further research and experimentation. The happy progress in North Carolina, and elsewhere, may prove to be a tragic exercise in futility unless a consummate effort is made to assimilate all that has been learned about the curriculum for modern foreign languages in the schools and make the findings available in an immediately usable form to the school systems of the United States that seek to improve the language curriculum.

The planning of such curricular development may be the responsibility of local officials and faculty, of a state department of education, of, in part at least, consultants drawn from institutions of higher learning, or, perhaps increasingly in the future, of many of the 2,000 "supplementary educational centers" to be supported with Federal funds under provisions of Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. But wherever the responsibility may be placed, nowhere can a truly satisfactory job of curriculum planning take place because a fundamental consideration, flowing out of language teaching developments of the past decade, has not yet received serious attention. This was the finding of the relatively sophisticated collaborators in the Indiana Language Program when they were called upon to prepare a foreign language curriculum for the guidance of Indiana schools--"all theoretical consideration and all possible advances of a practical nature were blocked or impeded by one single factor: the absence of fuller definition of levels of learning, or terminal goals, in the various stages of the foreign language curriculum."

The concept of "levels" in school language learning as opposed to "years" was developed by Nelson Brooks in Language and Language Learning, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1960 (revised 1964), and it was quickly adopted by the profession. Brooks wrote: "As we know from observing the preschool child, the subject matter of language learning can be suited to the age, ability, and interest of the learner. The basic patterns of phonology, morphology, and syntax are identical, whether the speaker is six years old or sixty. Since similar amounts of language learning are to be acquired at different ages, in different schools, and in differing lengths of time, some word other than year is needed to express in common terms the learnings attempted and the results achieved. The word level is proposed as such a term, and subject matter may be divided up into a number of such levels, any one of which contains elements that may be learned under a variety of conditions."

II. Proposal for Action

This is a proposal for a plan which, over a period of three years, will seek to mobilize all relevant resources into the development of a program to meet the urgent situation.

A plan for orderly and productive curricular reform in foreign-language teaching must be adaptable to newer formulations and clarifications of national needs, to different and changing local conditions, to the goals of instruction in both

schools and colleges, and to the special problems posed by different languages and different learners. It must also include effective instruments for its own evolution in the light of new knowledge. Evolution in the light of new knowledge implies a developing research base. Such a research base should ultimately produce one or more self-consistent theories of second-language learning that continuously generate testable hypotheses leading toward effective methodological changes. National efforts toward curricular reform in other fields seem to have been most effective where the most productive of university scholars and the most forward-looking of teachers and administrators have collaborated. The plan for curricular reform in foreign language teaching to be developed under the present proposal would encourage and utilize such collaboration both in suggesting short-range changes and in evolving an adequate research base, for such a research base may well develop best along a two-way avenue, the problems of the learner observed as he goes through the learning process providing research insights for scholars in all the contributing disciplines, research insights whose results can be tested in the schools, the testing process itself yielding, in turn, fresh insights for investigation.

A conference conducted at Bloomington, Indiana, on 23-25 September 1965 under the auspices of the Indiana Language Program (see Appendix A for participants) addressed itself to the fundamental problems discussed above and reached the conclusion that the most promising manner for resolving the situation would be

a project along these lines.

Specifically, the project would set out to accomplish the following outcomes:

A. The preparation of a set of tool publications for investigating and improving the modern foreign language curriculum in a school system. The most effective organization of data developed in this project should not be fixed until activities are well advanced. At present the outlines of five major tool publications seems apparent. These tools might be designated as:

1. The Curriculum Rationale. A compendium of desiderata from all pertinent fields and disciplines which conceivably have a bearing upon the content and ordering of the modern foreign language curriculum. This publication would set out in full detail all the considerations which ought to arise when a school system undertakes to review and improve its foreign language program. (See Appendix B for a detailed discussion of this publication.)

2. Three Curriculum Planning Guides--one for French, one for German, and the third for Spanish. Each would seek to respond to the desiderata raised in the Curriculum Rationale in terms of the special problems of the target language. (See Appendix C.) Each Guide would be based upon existing

documentation of research and experimentation, or, lacking such documentation, upon the testimony of experience or hypothesis. Every decision or judgment will be supported by a reference to the Documentation Bank.

3. The Documentation Bank. This is the critical item in the plan. All relevant bibliography would be recorded here and annotated. All conference and consultant recommendations would be duly reproduced. The contents of the Bank would be subjected to a classification system which would have to be developed, and this classification system would serve as reference for future research and experimentation which bears upon the language curriculum. Besides the significance of the substantive content and the new, organic classification, the Bank enables the curriculum-maker to check for himself behind the decisions and choices of the Curriculum Planning Guides. Thus the Guides are not autonomously prescriptive; any interested person may examine the evidence on any point and arrive at an independent judgment.

B. The identification of many areas, great and small, in which research and experimentation are needed, The specialists assisting in the project will constantly come upon relevant matters for which no adequate research exists. These will be referenced within the classification system of the Bank

and efforts will be made to encourage appropriate research and to seek sources of financial support.

C. Initiation of a newsletter to insure widespread dissemination of information about the project as it proceeds, to invite comments and criticism, and to cultivate the potential for research in areas where the project shows gaps.

D. The implementation of a comprehensive plan for the use of the tool publications in reviewing and developing language curricula. Two main activities are contemplated. First, efforts will be made to encourage sound proposals to the U.S. Office of Education for support to special summer institutes to acquaint selected supervisory personnel with the principles and substance of the tool publications so that they may serve as field consultants to school systems and "supplementary centers" which are reviewing the local language curriculum. Second, the third and final year of this project will be devoted to a concentrated information campaign, including speeches at key state, regional, and national meetings of educational personnel in administration, curriculum development, and foreign languages.

III. Three-Year Schedule of Activities

PHASE I
(July - August 1966)

1. Identifying staff and consultant manpower
2. Planning logistics
3. Meeting of Advisory Committee
4. Meeting of ten Chairmen of Discipline Conferences (Education, Linguistics, Psychology, Anthropology, Literature, etc.)
5. Initiation of data collection for Documentation Bank

PHASE II
(September 1966 - June 1967)

A. Fall semester

1. Developing contents of the Modern Foreign Language Curriculum Rationale, chiefly through ten disciplinary conferences and the use of expert consultants
2. Continuing collection and annotation of data for Documentation Bank
3. Initiation of Newsletter to over 500 key correspondents who have agreed to review and comment on project developments

B. Spring semester

1. Wide dissemination of draft Curriculum Rationale for criticisms
2. Second meeting of ten Chairmen of Discipline Conferences
3. Second meeting of Advisory Committee
4. Continuing collection and annotating of data for Documentation Bank
5. Initial work on French, German, and Spanish Curriculum Planning Guides
6. Continuing Newsletter communication
7. Manuscripts of all publications submitted for publication

PHASE III
(July 1967 - September 1968)

1. Preparation of the French, German, and Spanish Curriculum Planning Guides by three teams of language specialists with heavy consultant assistance
2. Preparation of the final version of the Modern Foreign Language Curriculum Rationale
3. Preparation of the Documentation Bank
4. Third meeting of Advisory Committee
5. Third meeting of Chairmen of Discipline Conferences

6. Preparation of schedule of needed research and experimentation.
7. Conference on U.S. Government financial assistance programs relevant to this project
8. Continuing Newsletter communication

PHASE IV
(July - August 1968)

1. All texts in press and in proofreading stage
2. Staff work papers prepared for follow up and continuation activities
3. Training of project field consultants begins at at least three summer institutes supported with funds of the National Defense Education Act. (Institute participants will include foreign language supervisors from state departments of education as well as selected college and university specialists in language teaching and professional curriculum specialists drawn from the 2,000 Government-sponsored "supplementary centers.")

PHASE V
(September 1968 - June 1969)

1. Printing and dissemination of project publications
2. Promotion of use of publications in curriculum planning
3. Promotion of needed new research and experimentation

4. Promotion of further NDEA institutes in the summer of 1969 for preparing additional project field consultants
5. Continued use of the Newsletter for above purposes
6. Fourth meeting of Advisory Committee

PROVISIONAL STAFFING PLAN

(x) indicates position filled full-time in that Phase

	PHASE I	PHASE II	PHASE III	PHASE IV	PHASE V
Director	x	x	x	x	x
Staff Associate	x	x			
Staff Assistant	x	x			x
Research Expert	x	x	x	x	
Editor	x	x	x	x	
Editorial Associate	x	x	x	x	x
Senior FL Specialist (3)		xxx (1/2 time)	xxx	xxx	
FL Associate (3)			xxx	xxx	
FL Assistant (3)			xxx	xxx	
Secretaries (3)	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	
Secretary					x
Typists (2)			xx	xx	
Typist					x

APPENDIX A

CONFERENCE ON DEFINITION OF LEVELS

IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

September 23-25, 1965

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

PARTICIPANTS

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Modern Language Association

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APPENDIX B

The Curriculum Rationale

The Curriculum Rationale is fundamental to the program. It will serve to gather, in a way that has never been systematically attempted, the foundations of language learning and instruction as they derive not only from within the FL teaching field, but from linguistics, the study of literature, cultural anthropology, psychology, physiology, elementary and secondary education, programming, testing, and many other fields.

The statement of rationale will address itself to such issues as these:

1. The role of FL instruction as part of the common purpose of American education. A careful statement of the general goals and purposes of language study in this country. Identification of broad national and international concerns, general cultural and societal standards which in effect shape the goals of FL teaching.

2. The position of FLs in the total curriculum, their relation to other subjects, the shape of their instructional pattern in broad outline, e.g., number of years of study appropriate to foreign language, amounts of curricular time, kind of instruction (levels of continuum, division into grades or "continuous education"), segment of the school population in question (all or part of what age groups?), the problem of articulation or transition presented by the divisions of the American school system; and other general concerns.

3. The central objectives of a full program of FL instruction. A statement of such terminal goals in an "ideal" program, as the best reference point for less extensive or shorter exposure to FLs. A careful specification of what the student should be able to do at the end, for example, of a period of study which began in the elementary or junior high school, in terms of:

a. Control of the basic skills--listening, speaking, reading, writing--in what degrees and in what contexts? How close to native control can how many students come?

b. Access to cultural material: literature, folklore, historical traditions, value systems, etc. In what proportion? With what relation to other subjects in the curriculum?

c. Ability to react to and interpret culture-related events, works and issues. Not only demonstration of understanding of a short story, for example, but also ability to converse with a native speaker about a political or social problem. To what degree possible?

d. Understanding of the physical and social environment in which the language is used. How much of the study of the country's geography, for example, is appropriate to foreign language instruction? The role of residence abroad as a part of our ultimate goals--how important to how many?

e. Comprehension of the language as a language structure, i.e., linguistic knowledge about the FL as part of the purpose of learning it.

f. How much does it help in motivation, how necessary (and at what stages) as a goal in itself?

4. The psychological and physiological bases of language learning and a description of varying levels of ability to absorb new data and patterns at various ages--at least in so far as present research allows such statements.

5. An outline of the matter to be learned, in terms of phonology, grammatical structures, vocabulary; also of production skills and comprehension skills. (Actually a relatively brief statement, since most of this material is a function of the specific language involved and will appear in the separate Curriculum Planning Guides for French, German, and Spanish.)

6. Procedures, methods, etc. for acquiring the basic skills. (Like much of what follows, an implementation of the points contained in the section on "objectives.") The whole area of methodology.

7. What media are effective in producing correct pronunciation, for example, at different levels or stages? Similarly, morphological and syntactical patterns.

8. What testing is appropriate at various levels, in various aspects of language learning?

9. What materials, in general terms, are available (stated in reference to the first summer's operation of gathering all available data)?

10. What linguistic analyses (structural, transformational, etc.) are available and helpful in language teaching?

11. What differing emphases among all available approaches are relevant to each stage or level of learning?

12. Of the cultural (literary, etc.) elements in the curriculum, an indication of what is appropriate to every stage or level of instruction. Recommendation, for example, of the sort of literature (poetry or prose, original or "fabricated," modern or older, closely national or broadly cosmopolitan, etc.) that can be introduced as <u>first</u> readings--and when? Careful specification, with the aid of cultural anthropologists, sociologists, and others, of the kinds of cultural descriptions and contrasts useful at various age levels.

13. Relation of FL instruction and learning to other subject fields. Positive and negative implications of the student's background in social studies or English, for example. If a student has had experience with literary analysis in English, how can this be turned to advantage in his language class? Conversely, if he has had no training in literature in English, what (if anything) can be done in foreign poetry or prose. Relationship of studies in history, for another example, to work done in FL. Possible areas of joint undertaking, e.g., class sessions of an art course dealing with European art and conducted in French.

14. Motivational factors operative at various levels--one of the most neglected aspects of curricular (and general psychological) investigation. What makes a 6th grader want to learn a foreign language? How does his "attitudinal stance" differ from that of a high school junior? What forces can be brought to bear here, from cross-cultural stimuli to prospects of foreign study?

15. Administrative features of every sort that affects foreign language instruction, e.g.:

Time to be devoted, understood as total span

Time to be devoted, in terms of hours per week

Space considerations, including labs and audio-visual, large and small classrooms, auditoriums, language club facilities, if any, etc.

Curricular "organizing principles," for example, what large class facilities and what small-class ones, what "continuous" education: patterns versus what "graded" ones, based, of course, on materials and techniques that dictate or suggest such approaches.

Aspects of teaching (related to above), such as team-teaching, small discussion classes, interest groups, etc.

16. Sources of help and reference available to the teacher, administrator, curriculum planner. Not just published materials (though these are vital) [illegible] but also agencies and centers.

17. Sources of support for experimentation in curricular organization, language teaching, and any aspect thereof. An indication of how to use, intelligently and productively, the aid which stems, for example, from the Federal government's concern for elementary and secondary education.

APPENDIX C

Curriculum Planning Guides

Perhaps the most tangible and immediately applicable goal of this project will be the production of three individually designed but similar Curriculum Planning Guides for each of three target languages: French, German, and Spanish. These documents will in part contain a clear and detailed indication of the contents and attainable goals for each level of instruction and for all aspects of foreign language learning. These would include such details as the phonological, syntactical, morphological, and lexical aspects as they may apply to speaking, understanding, reading, and writing. Based on the most thorough reviews of practice and past research, as well as the results of research and testing carried on in conjunction with the development of this project, the three guides would attempt to provide specific, well-documented answers to the largely unanswered questions which beset those planning foreign language programs for our schools. The guides cannot be completely described here, since the very nature of the problems involved in their production calls for a long, involved process of investigation. However, the following pages are an attempt to outline the form such a document might take for any one language. Since there is a variety of circumstances, goals, objectives, course sequences, program lengths, etc. involved in the makeup of any individual Spanish program of instruction, the guide would have to take these all into consideration. For sake of brevity, we might assume that there are three major "streams"

of instruction to be included: a four-year program, a six-year program, and a ten-year program. These programs could begin at almost any point in the educational system. Let us pose a hypothetical situation, one which foreign language consultants and supervisors face almost daily throughout the United States, and examine the problems--problems to which the Curriculum Planning Guide for Spanish would address itself.

Metropolitan School District "A"has decided to coordinate and articulate its Spanish program in the seven elementary schools, two junior high schools, and the senior high school. At the present time they are teaching Spanish in grades 9, 10, and 11; there is no program in the junior high school, but four of the seven elementary schools have some work in Spanish. In school "2" there is a Spanish program three days a week for twenty minutes each day, in grades 4 and 5. The other schools have other combinations. The superintendent calls a meeting of principals, language teachers, guidance people, the curriculum supervisors, language arts directors, etc., and brings in the state supervisor of modern foreign language to help decide on what should be done.

Here are some of the questions that come:

1. When shall we begin our Spanish program? In what grade?
2. Should Spanish be offered to all the students?
3. Should it be compulsory?
4. Shall we attempt to initiate both FLES and junior high language at the same time?

5. Must there be continuity? Why?
6. Is there value in FLES if it is not articulated in a long sequence with the high school progr[illegible]?
7. How can we test the results of our elementary program?
8. What should our objective be for the total program?
9. How long must it run?
10. Which objectives are most appropriate for the 3rd grade, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, etc.?
11. How can we best achieve these objectives?
12. What content can we assume most appropriate for each level?
13. What are the terminal goals at each level?
14. How can we test or measure the attainment of these goals?
15. What are the specific cultural and anthropological features of the Spanish language and the Spanish speaking people which can be taught in grade 3, 4, etc.?
16. What are the linguistic features of Spanish that should be taught in grade 3, 4, etc.?
17. Which literature should we emphasize in our advanced work (Spanish, Mexican, Chilean, etc.)?
18. What other kinds of objectives can we expect beside linguistic and cultural?
19. How can we improve motivation and decrease attrition?
20. What kinds of materials are most successful at each level? Which instructional techniques?

21. What preparation should the teachers have and how can this be determined?

These are only a sample of hundreds of questions which have broadly subjective answers at the present time. The Guide would at least approach the goal of objectivity-- but without being prescriptive or presumptive. Anyone wanting to set up a good, long sequence program with modern goals would be able to use the Guide to find answers applicable to his own particular situation and needs. If he felt that the "answers" were questionable or did not apply clearly, he could go to the Documentation Bank for the sources from which the answers were derived. If he then continued to disagree with the result, he could go further to the primary sources and repeat the experiment for himself.

The questions would be answered differently depending on the community's goals for the program, the physical situation, the financial enablement, the starting point, the length of course sequence, the preparation of the teachers, etc.

Most of the foregoing problems and questions are of a general nature. They could apply to most languages. Within each target language, however, there are enough differences and enough detailed questions to require that a separate publication be prepared. Perhaps the sequence of learning each of the four basic skills (understanding, speaking, reading, writing) and the length of time involved will differ from language to language. Perhaps even the desirable starting point will be different. These are matters which at present are unanswerable at the local level since the funds, the amount of effort, and the consultative resources are

beyond the capabilities of any one educational unit. The past tendency has been to seek answers by pooling the information gathered from a number of similarly perplexed sources, and to assume that group experiences which did not end in failure can be equated to desirable practices.